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This disease faces the management office of the invited comments management. Schraut, Peck, Telander, Martin, Nicholls, Johnston, Kelly, and Belliveau that help us to judge the rival merits of the different techniques and methods of management.

There is a small section on the experience with a balloon developed and used in the Mayo Clinic but no reference or even condemnation of the other types of balloon tamponade, such as is used in Santa Barbara, California, nor is there reference to the magnetic continent device as developed in Erlangen, Germany. In so comprehensive a book perhaps these should have been included.

The book ends with an account of stoma therapy which, like the account of the balloon occlusive device, is somewhat parochial. The last sentence in this chapter and therefore in the whole book reads as follows: 'A thorough knowledge of all the approaches available to the patient after proctocolectomy is of great importance if patients are to be offered the best and the most current enterostomal care.' I presume they mean newest; most current is impossible.

The literary style of the book is reasonably uniform considering the many authors involved, the hand of professional English editors is evident. Perhaps such professionals can be forgiven for misspelling of some proper names. Bryan Brooke whose surnamed handsome face is the only non-clinical photograph in the book has so many eponymous references he will probably forgive them for misspelling his name on page 189 and Lief Hulten may not be too upset on finding his name misspelt in the references on page 210.

The illustrations are good in parts but some are very bad and are clearly reproductions of illustrations in articles that should never have been reproduced. The employment of a single artist to illustrate the whole book would have been a worthwhile investment.

The book represents a labour of love and enthusiasm. It is a must for the surgical obsessionist and should sell well.

J ALEXANDER-WILLIAMS


This book on office management of colon and rectal disease faces the anticipated problem of defining the limit of its brief. The authors have tried to keep it within the stated province but from time to time encroach beyond, and in places the book tends towards a full textbook of colorectal disease, particularly for cancer and diverticular disease. When it does so, detail and breadth are lacking.

The authors are backed by a large experience in the field and give much useful information. The book is beautifully produced with excellent diagrams including some colour plates and illustrations of operative procedures. There is a good account of colonoscopy and of local anaesthesia. Its weakness, however, is a somewhat anecdotal style with insufficient numerical data. In this regard the account of inflammatory bowel disease is inadequate and elsewhere controversial statements are made without evidence – for example, on haemorrhoids, fissure and anorectal sepsis. Pruritus ani is regarded as a disease rather than a symptom and rectal prolapse is included in the chapter on 'Rare problems of the colon and rectum'. There is no account of pelvic floor disorders, including incontinence or of infections and diarrhoea. Terminology of polyps is confusing, as is the classification of fistula in ano. References are of variable quality and include a fair number of personal communications. While some sections and the illustrations are good, others are indifferent.

R J NICHOLLS


This volume is the 42nd in the series of monographs of the Physiological Society. Since 1953, this publishing venture has produced some important contemporary reviews of various aspects of physiology, but this is the first time that it has sponsored the translation of a scientific classic. The editorial board are to be congratulated on the choice of both subject and translator; if this volume is the prototype for future classic monographs, the omens are propitious.

Claude Bernard is best known in this country for the concept of 'le milieu interieur'; his classic work on the secretion and action of pancreatic juice is not widely known, and the home team of Bayliss and Starling take the credit for 'discovering' pancreatic secretion. Bernard's work included studies of pancreatic secretion in birds, fishes and reptiles, as well as observations on living animals and the bodies of decapitated criminals, and its range will surprise contemporary physiologists, who tend to cling to a...
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single experimental model like toddlers hugging their security blankets. The fascination of this book does not, however, lie in the scientific data that it contains; this is the first rather than the last word on pancreatic function.

The book is a graphic demonstration of the way in which the frenetic scramble to publish in the competition for grants, jobs, and prestige has debased the style and standard of scientific writing. It covers, so we are told, about eight years of personal research work, and was written some years after most of the work was done. The style is lucid, considered and personal. Bernard was not afflicted by diffidence: 'I have had the opportunity of repeating my experiments in front of many French and foreign scientists, who were all struck by the clarity of the results and the inevitability of my conclusions'. The text is not only replete with experimental details but also critical consideration of the work of eminent contemporaries; the latter, needless to say, do not emerge with great credit from the confrontation.

There is much that is of scientific interest. Bernard realised the importance of studying animals with permanent pancreatic fistulae, but although: 'I have invented several special cannulae with this in mind . . . I have never been completely successful.' He foreshadowed the study of trophic effects on the bowel: 'The most remarkable aspect of the experiments involving artificial openings in the intestine is the conspicuous atrophy that occurs in the intestine below the opening . . .'. But he concluded, erroneously, that: 'During fasting there is no pancreatic secretion'; it was 50 years before this was disproved by the work of Boldyreff, whose classic but neglected thesis, written in French, might be a candidate for future publication in this series.

An important feature of the original monograph was the remarkable illustrations of pancreatic anatomy; the publishers of this translation deserve great credit for the beautiful reproductions, as well as for the high standards of typography and layout. Above all, John Henderson, a modest individual, has clearly relished the task of recreating the presence of a very different kind of scientist, and in addition to an elegant translation, has provided a short scholarly and witty introduction. This is a book to keep rather than return to the library shelf; it is a pity that the price will deter prospective purchasers. It should be commended to wealthy and indulgent relatives who can never think what to give you for your birthday.

DAVID WINGATE


This is a multiple author text containing the opinions of over 300 US physicians about the treatment of a variety of general medical problems. The sections are generally short and straightforward but are unrefereed and unfortunately for the UK reader difficulty inevitably stems from the need to cope with unfamiliar drug names. To write a simple review seemed unlikely to be helpful and therefore as an alternative the book was left on the open shelves of our department with an attached comment sheet.

Interalia the following were noted, in the gastrointestinal section the information about peptic ulcer was anecdotal, incomplete and not impartial (as the author himself admits). The section on drug induced hepatic injury was by contrast far better written. The general medical sections were difficult to apply in practical terms and it was noteworthy that department members generally did not often consult the book. For the postgraduate an unrefereed text like this is of limited value and for undergraduates this book falls uncomfortably between clinical pharmacology and internal medicine. We think it unlikely that it will have much of a market in this country.

M J S LANGMAN AND R P WALT

News

International Association for the Study of the Liver (IASL)

This meeting will be held in Caracas, Venezuela from 14–17 September 1986. Further details from Dr Simon Beker, Centro Commercial Mata de Coco, Piso 3 Av. Blandin, La Castellana, Caracas 1060, Venezuela.

West African Society of Gastroenterology (WASOG)

A major international conference will be held in Nigeria on 26–28 March 1986 at the University of Port Harcourt to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Society. Further details from Dr J O Ibu, College of Health Sciences, University of Port Harcourt, PMB 5323, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.